

CERTIFIED TRANSLATION

BY OLGA M. ALICEA, FCCI, NJITCE-S

NOTICEL

Now

Doctors Segundo Rodríguez and Juan Salgado pointed out as responsible for the APEX contract

According to testimonies, they recommended the purchase of one million tests at \$38 each, instead of 500,000 at \$10, among others findings.

By: Adriana De Jesús Salamán ✉

Posted: Apr 15, 2020 12:16 AM

Updated: Apr 15, 2020 12:16 AM



Adil Rosa Rivera, assistant secretary of the Department of Health, received an offer of immunity during the start of her testimony before the Commission on Health of the House of Representatives.

Photo: Juan R. Costa / NotiCel

Dr. Segundo Rodríguez Quilichini, who leads the medical "Task Force" that advises Governor Wanda Vázquez Garced on the emergency of the coronavirus, or COVID-19, as well as Dr. Juan L. Salgado Morales, were designated as those responsible for introducing, endorsing, and ordering the purchase from the Apex General Contractors (APEX) company to receive one million rapid tests for \$38 million.

According to the testimony under oath of Adil Rosa Rivera, who until April 15 continues to be positioned as assistant secretary of the Department of Health, APEX offered a million tests at \$38 each, while the Glovex company could give 500,000 tests at \$10 each.

However, it was these two officials who insisted on the purchase from APEX.

"Whose order was it to buy tests at \$38 and not at \$10?" asked Representative Juan Oscar Morales Rodríguez, Chair of the Commission of Health of the House of Representatives.

"Dr. Segundo Rodríguez and Dr. Salgado," replied Rosa Rivera.

CERTIFIED TRANSLATION

BY OLGA M. ALICEA, FCCI, NJITCE-S

In earlier testimony during the day, it was reported that the "Task Force" evaluated the purchase during a meeting at the Emergency Operations Center (COE), in Caguas. The conclave was attended by Rosa Rivera, Mabel Cabeza Rivera, former head of personnel at Health, and the members of the Medical "Task Force," as well as Health procurement analyst Mariel Rivera Rivera.

Rivera Rivera was the one who showed from her computer the price of what initially were 200,000 rapid tests to a company represented by attorney Juan Maldonado de Jesús, who would later be revealed as APEX, and a brochure of the offers.

According to Rosa Rivera, on her part, an email verifies that Maldonado de Jesús had sent a proposal for a quote to Cabeza Rivera, Rodríguez Quilichini, and Dr. Roberto Rosso before being contacted by her and Rivera Rivera.

Read also: [Quiñones de Longo deposes on controversial Health tests, but another official asks for an attorney](#)

"I remember that Mabel Cabeza would call us to follow up on how many ventilators had been purchased. Dr. Rodríguez gives me the phone number [of Maldonado de Jesús] in person. I understand that he was called, he was asked to quote, a quote that I never saw. It was the March 24. He hints that 'as sent previously by email, here is the quote,'" narrated Rosa Rivera.

Earlier during the executive hearing of the Health Commission it was explained that initially APEX had submitted a quote for ventilators. Then, past midnight, he submitted the proposal for 200,000 tests at \$73.95 each. However, at the request of the Medical "Task Force," Maldonado de Jesús increased the offer to one million tests at a discounted price of \$38 each.

The tests, however, did not have the endorsement of the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA, by its English acronym).

When asked why they decided to choose a company that had not previously provided products and did not appear to have any experience selling items related to the health field, Rosa Rivera indicated that the other companies that had been contracted had not complied with the delivery agreements up until then.

"What happens is that the 'Task Force,' given how the cases were rising, they determined that to do the 'contact training' we cannot be doing five thousand tests, two thousand tests. That is the analysis of the experts I hear there. First they had required three million tests. I was even shocked, because I don't know where they got that metric and Dr. Marcia [Cruz] explained to me and told me that they needed 1.5 million of 'rapid kits' among other companies," added Rosa Rivera.

CERTIFIED TRANSLATION

BY OLGA M. ALICEA, FCCI, NJITCE-S

[Photo of Adil Rosa with link to a YouTube video - https://youtu.be/K_lpplterwQ - with the following caption over the picture: They offer immunity to Adil Rosa after revealing testimony]

According to a series of text messages leaked over the weekend, Maldonado de Jesús, who is also a former executive director of the Maritime Transport Authority (MTA), contacted Rodríguez Quilichini, in what today was stressed was the initial contact for the failed million dollars purchase of rapid tests for COVID-19.

Based on the messages, in which Maldonado de Jesus alludes that he knows former legislative adviser Eduardo "Tito" Laureano, the former official made available an inventory of personal protective equipment.

Laureano knows Rodríguez Quilichini and he had contracts in the Medical Sciences Campus (MSC) of the University of Puerto Rico, where the doctor serves as dean.

When Rodríguez Quilichini was reprimanded about APEX during a special televised program of the "Task Force," he categorized the questions as "gossip" and insisted that the advisory body did not intervene in Health's procurement processes. After this broadcast, the next special program did not have intervention from the press and it was announced that this would be the norm from that moment on.

Read also: [WIPR excludes journalists from other channels in broadcasts with medical "Task Force"](#)

They offer her immunity

After that revelation, New Progressive Party (NPP) Representative José Aponte Hernández proposed to the Chair of the Health Commission offering immunity to Rosa Rivera.

That procedure requires Rosa Rivera's attorneys to exchange information with the attorneys of the Health Commission to determine how valid Rosa Rivera's offerings are.

If accepted, the Health Commission must render a confidential report to the full House of Representatives with the offerings. The plenary session, then, would take to a vote the decision to grant her immunity. If it is approved, that immunity is only applicable to state crimes, not federal ones.

Rosa Rivera, who was accompanied by her attorney Ángel Triano, indicated that she would evaluate the proposal, so she got two days to consider it.

She must communicate her decision on Thursday at 10 a.m. If she rejects it, you should be prepared to continue the executive hearing and answer the legislators' questions.

CERTIFIED TRANSLATION

BY OLGA M. ALICEA, FCCI, NJITCE-S

Read also: [\\$19 million advance to Apex General Contractors breaches government regulations](#)

Popular Democratic Party (PDP) Representative Rafael "Tatito" Hernández Montañez categorized as "premature" the offer of immunity.

"First the witness has to give an offer of proof that links a person of higher hierarchy in the corruption scheme," argued Hernández Montañez.

Meanwhile, Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) Representative Denis Márquez Lebrón assured that he would remain attentive to the process that was communicated in full hearing without prior discussion.

"I will be very watchful of this process. Theoretically with immunities, crimes committed at the state level cannot be prosecuted at all. It does not apply at the federal level," said Márquez Lebrón.

Rodríguez Quilichini implicated more

On the other hand, Rosa Rivera pointed to Rodríguez Quilichini as the one who imparted orders to Health employees and contractors over the authority of that agency's head.

Among the decisions attributed to him is having changed the place of delivery of 500 rapid tests, or "test kits," to the COE in Caguas, instead of the Department's Public Health Laboratory, as then secretary Concepción Quiñones de Longo had originally ordered.

In a letter, the former official confirmed that there was an administrative ruling with 500 "test kits" from the Quest Diagnostics company. According to the letter, Quest's general manager Miguel C. Ribas received instructions to change the place of delivery of the "test kits" to the COE and the person designated to receive them, in this case Cabeza Rivera.

Read also: [Former Secretary of Health left among administrative failures and differences with the Governor](#)

On Rodríguez Quilichini's orders, Rosa Rivera confessed that it was she who called Ribas. "I counted them, reviewed them, and once that was the quantity of tests, I signed the document. They were sent to an area established in the COE under lock and key. It was 'Task Force' personnel," revealed the Assistant Secretary.

The first allusion to this form of usurpation of powers by Rodríguez Quilichini came from Quiñones de Longo, who resigned from his position due to discrepancies with the Governor and actions of the "Task Force" that he did not detail.

CERTIFIED TRANSLATION

BY OLGA M. ALICEA, FCCI, NJITCE-S

In the first executive hearing, Quiñones de Longo assured that other agency employees and advisers linked to La Fortaleza acted above her role as head in decision-making and in the execution of millions in purchases given the COVID-19 emergency.

[Photo] Adriana De Jesus Salamán

Journalist who covers government, court and political issues. She is also interested in sports, movies and music. She is a former student of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus.

© 360 TELECOM CORPORATION

CERTIFICATION

I, Olga M. Alicea, an English-Spanish Interpreter and Translator certified to that effect by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and by the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT), do hereby certify that I have personally translated the foregoing document from Spanish to English and that the translation is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and abilities.

S/ Olga M. Alicea
Olga M. Alicea, FCCI, NJITCE-S
Fed. Cert. No. 98-005

May 31, 2020
Date
Ref.: P1701.841(CGB)